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26/5 (March) 1855
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Dr. BROWN's
S E R M O N,
ON THE
DANGERS AND DUTIES
OF THE
SEAFARING LIFE.



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OF THE
SEAFARING LIFE;

PREACHED BEFORE THE
Protestant Dissenting Congregation,
AT HALIFAX;

AND PUBLISHED AT THE DESIRE OF THE
MARINE SOCIETY,
IN THAT PLACE.

BY ANDREW BROWN, D.D.
Minister of the Protestant Dissenting Congregation.

PRINTED AT THE *Apello Press*, IN BOSTON,
BY BELKNAP AND HALL,
DOCK SQUARE.—1793.
AND FOR SALE AT THE BOSTON BOOKSTORE,
NO. 59, CORNHILL.

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THE following Sermon, hastily prepared at sea, while the feelings it describes and the train of thought to which they lead were fresh on the mind, was delivered in the ordinary course of duty, without any view to publication. At that time, the Author did not know of the existence of a Society in this place for the benevolent purpose of patronizing and relieving distressed seamen ; and could not foresee that his discourse would meet their approbation, or be thought capable of promoting the designs of their institution.

A sense of gratitude for much kind attention received from sailors, and a sincere desire of contributing to their benefit, has induced him to comply with the too partial request of the MARINE SOCIETY (the principle of whose institution he highly approves) and to suffer this discourse to be printed for their use.

HALIFAX, April 2, 1793.



ADVERTISING

1. The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been appointed to the various committees of the Board of Directors of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, for the year ending December 31, 1901.

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PSALM cvii. from verse 23 to 33.

They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters : These see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths : their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet, so he bringeth them unto their desired haven. Oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men ! Let them exalt him in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.

THE Ministers of the Gospel are appointed to explain the doctrines of Christianity, to administer its sacraments, and to inculcate the practice of piety and good works. Their commission instructs them to preach the glad tidings of reconciliation and forgiveness to every creature, and they are authorized by the example of an apostle, to become all things to all men,

that they may gain some. Hence it is their duty to select all sorts of subjects, and to address all classes of men. No order is so despicable as to be below their notice, and none so profligate as to be beyond their hope.

In their pastoral care of the Christian Church, it is incumbent on Ministers to consider the particular situations in which their congregations are placed, the character of the different ranks which compose them, and the dangers and temptations to which they are subjected; that they may be enabled to accommodate their discourses to their capacity, and to recommend, with energy and effect, the sentiments and conduct which are suited to their circumstances in life.

In a seaport town, where many have concerns on the ocean, and are employed in ships, it will not surely be reckoned too great an encroachment on the rights of general instruction, to bestow a particular discourse on the seafaring life; especially when we consider that none of the works of God are indifferent to any of his people, and that the practical instructions deducible from the present subject, will, in a great measure, be equally applicable to all.

Were further justification necessary for adopting such a theme, I should say of the order of men to whom it more particularly belongs, what the Jews said of the Centurion, who besought

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Jesus for the recovery of his servant, "They are worthy for whom we should do this." Though rough in manners and in speech, their hearts are good, and readily warm with friendship for each other, and with pity to the poor. They are very susceptible of serious impressions and of gratitude to God; and though not generally distinguished by the profession of religion, they are at worst, I trust, more thoughtless and inconsiderate, than obstinately wicked.

In the text, which is equally remarkable for simplicity of style and justness of description, the Psalmist has given us a very animated representation of the dangers of the seafaring life, and of the impressions which they make on the heart of the mariner. Treading in the steps of this inspired guide, I propose to offer a few observations on the following articles immediately connected with this profession:

I. On the belief of the existence and government of God, or at least of the practical consequences of that principle, which is expressed or implied in navigation, and in all the hazardous occupations of life.

II. On the signal manifestations of the divine power and providence which are made to the mariner on the great waters.

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III. On the imminent dangers of the seafaring life, and the merciful protection which God extends to those who are engaged in it.

IV. On the sentiments and conduct becoming this exposed and perilous profession.

All these ideas are evidently included in the words of the Psalm, "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters: These see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths; their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet, so he bringeth them unto their desired haven. Oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders."

I begin with offering a few observations on the belief of the existence and government of God, or at least of the practical consequences of that prin-

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ciple, which is expressed or implied in navigation, and in all the hazardous occupations of life.

Whether we fear God, or do not fear him, we are indebted to principles established by religion for our comfort and security in all the trying exigences of this mortal state. In a particular manner it is owing to our belief in the existence of God, and in the fixed laws of his government, that we go down to the sea in ships with composure and expectation. Were there no order in nature, no presiding Agent, and no settled connection between causes and effects, we durst not trust ourselves from firm ground, and could not tread even there with any measure of confidence.

Did we believe that chance had produced the system of the universe, and placed us in our station, we could have no security for the continuance of our existence, or for the duration of the world in which we dwell. Chance cannot work with design, and the fabric which it had so wonderfully reared, it might again destroy in a manner equally wonderful. In this state of uncertainty with respect to our being, we should have no determinate principles to regulate our conduct.

All things would appear single and unrelated, resulting from no established cause, and referring to no certain end. Of consequence experience

would be of no service to us, as we could not infer from what had taken place yesterday, that to-morrow the same causes would be attended with the same effects, or the same means productive of the same ends. The future would be wholly fortuitous, and on ordinary as well as extraordinary occasions, when we had any matter of importance at stake, we should be at our wit's end.

On the other hand if we had reason to suppose that an eternal fate and uncontrollable necessity directed the course of things, it would be our duty to wait in perfect tranquillity till their pleasure was made known, and then to submit to the decree without a struggle or a murmur. On this scheme, reason and prudence, effort and action would be completely superseded; nothing being more obvious than that fate cannot be altered, and that it is vain to contend with necessity.

Even on the best systems of infidelity, our existence and the world around us would be gloomy and uncomfortable. Unknown and irresistible powers, who had counted mankind worthy of no communication of their will, would be working on every side, without any regard for our happiness. Ignorant of their nature, and of the ends of their administration, in prosperity we should not be able to enjoy ourselves, or the

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arbitrary gifts of our invisible benefactors ; and in adversity we could have no present help, and no sustaining hope of future deliverance.

The belief of the existence and government of an everlasting and Almighty Being, wise, and just, and beneficent, composes our fears, and gives us courage and confidence in the most perilous scenes. By the discoveries of revelation, his perfections are made our trust, and his providence becomes our safeguard. There we learn that infinite wisdom cannot err, and that eternal goodness is incapable of change ; that the intelligence which knows the end from the beginning can ordain nothing but what is good, and that what is once ordained can never be improved, and consequently will not be altered.

These principles of religion inspire us with confidence in the order of nature, and in the efficacy of our own exertions. They assure us that in the time to come as well as in that which is past, the sun will rise in the east, and the magnet point to the pole ; that in the same latitudes the variation and declination of the needle will be regulated by the same laws ; and that in similar, circumstances, similar appearances will be the indication of similar effects.

Proceeding on these solid principles which are established by religion with still greater authority than by philosophy, the mariner weighs

his anchor, and spreads his canvas to the breeze. Under their direction he pursues his course thro' the pathless waters; sweeps the horrizon to ascertain the mid-day hour; calculates his distance from his port, and even ventures to predict the time of his arrival.

I do not mean, however, to assert by any of the preceding observations, that the persons who act upon these principles do it with design, or in a religious spirit. It is much to be feared that this is very seldom the case. Walking in a beaten track, and guided by custom and habit, they too often take advantage of them, as circumstances require, without any reflection at all. In the same situation they repeat the same action, instinctively and mechanically, with no concern about its immediate operation, or the ultimate effects which it is intended to produce. Nevertheless, when we trace their conduct to the foundation on which it rests, it evidently resolves itself into the principle here assigned, the belief that a wise and beneficent Providence rules the world by general and unalterable laws.

So necessary is the existence and government of God to the existence of the world, and the comfort of his creatures, and so true is it that in every step we take, we carry at least the practical conviction of his existence and government at

our hearts, and in our hands. Our belief of this truth is expressed or implied in the whole of our conduct, but more especially in our hazardous undertakings ; and considering how important this grand principle is to our security and enjoyment, it is our reproach as well as our crime, that we are ever so inattentive to our interest, as to act upon it without proper sentiments of rational trust and filial piety.

This inattention and negligence will appear more inexcusable in such as frequent the sea, if we consider, in the second place, the signal manifestations of the power and Providence of God which are daily made to them on that element. " They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters : These see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep."

The wisdom of the Almighty ordained the separation of the elements ; and by distributing them in admirable order and in just proportion, he has diversified the appearance, and increased the perfection of his works. The sea, that grand magazine of moisture, forms, as it were, a world by itself ; is peopled by distinct tribes of being ; and governed by peculiar laws. It likewise ministers, in an endless variety of ways, to the salubrity and fertility of the earth, and to the convenience and improvement of man. In this advanced stage of commercial intercourse,

it may well be said that the sea at once severs and unites the nations. In the infancy of things we may perhaps suppose that men viewed its swelling deeps with dismay, and turned from the advancing flood not only as from a boundary they were forbidden to pass, but also as from an enemy threatening to destroy. By degrees, however, they were reconciled to the appearance of this immense assemblage of water, and having learned that "God had broken up for it his decreed place, and set bars and doors, and said hitherto shalt thou come but no further, and here shall all thy proud waves be staid;"* they approached it with confidence, and soon became familiar with its storms and its tides. Nevertheless, to adopt the language of an ancient poet, three-fold oak, that is, the most invincible resolution, must have shielded his heart who first violated the sanctity of the ocean, and in a frail bark tempted the winds, and the waves, and the severer wrath of the angry powers who were supposed to have chosen it as their peculiar residence. But gathering courage from the success of their first adventures, and finding the benefit of their commerce with the deep, men soon became more enterprising; and while they proceeded with caution and prudence on their part, hoped by prayers and sacrifices to appease

* Job xxxviii. 10.

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the resentment of the gods of the waters, and to make them propitious to their designs. Necessity continuing to sharpen invention, expedients were multiplied on expedients to add to the ease and safety of conveyance by water. Every new generation improved on the practice of the past, and transmitted to future times some valuable discovery of its own ; till, in the progress of art and science, from a raft, which a few oiers bound together, a ship was constructed, the most ingenious and perfect of all the mechanical productions of man.

Thus to the dominion of the earth the dominion of the sea has been added ; and in the present improved state of shipbuilding, the mariner enjoys almost all the advantages which the land affords, and delivered from the illiberal terrors of superstition, has an opportunity of contemplating, without interruption and without fear, the works of God, and his wonders in the deep.

In this great department of nature, there are neither few nor inconsiderable, and it is not necessary to go far from land to discover them. Around the skirts of the shore a garden is planted in the waters, abounding with vegetable productions of various appearance and quality. This marine nursery is exceedingly beautiful.

The preparation which nature has made to attach its productions to the bottom, and to direct their growth to the surface and the light, is wonderful; and the whole of their economy is established by that masterly skill which has done all things well. In their watery bed they answer the good purposes for which they were created, and neither flourish nor fade in vain.

As we depart from the land, the ocean itself claims our undivided attention. In a state of rest it is a magnificent and stupendous object. Extending further than the eye or the imagination can reach, it is poured into bays and inlets without number, and encompasses the earth as a girdle. When the atmosphere is clear, the immeasurable expanse of water enlarges our faculties, and gives elevation to our conceptions of the universe. The mind swells with the scene which it contemplates; the range of vision is extended; and for the moment, an addition seems to be made to our notions of infinitude.

But this is a subject upon which we cannot enter. The consideration of the uses, phenomena and laws of the ocean, would divert us from our proper business, and lead to discussions unsuitable to this place. Suffice it to say, that if the earth is full of the riches of the Creator's wisdom and goodness, so also is the great and wide sea. Perhaps indeed the ocean is more

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replete with life than the land. Through the whole of its extent myriads of creatures range unconfined, and, with all our boasted science, it is but little that we know concerning them. At certain seasons of the year, particular species of them are found in one place, and at a different period they surprise the mariner in a far distant region. Some rude guesses have been made with regard to the length of their life; but we are strangers to the instincts which regulate their migrations, to the routine of service they perform, and to their various uses in the system of animated nature. So far indeed as the learned have been able to examine their external figure and their internal conformation, and to reason from these to their condition and business in their own element, they have found the most infallible proofs of the wisdom of the Creator, and of his unwearied attention to the perfection and happiness of his creatures.

The feathered tribes which dwell upon the ocean, or frequent its coasts, proclaim the same comfortable truth, that God is good to all, and that his tender mercies are over all his works. The extent of the sea is their domain; and feeble as they are, they are taught to shun, or fitted to resist the fierceness of the tempest. Wherever they are found they appear to be at home.

and though in general they move in flocks, yet some of them are seen alone far from any land, and, as it were, in a state of exile from the rest of their species. Delighting in the silence of an untroubled retreat, perhaps for months together they do not visit the shore; and their existence is entirely unknown save to him who seeth all things.

But a more interesting object sometimes attracts the mariner's notice and reminds him of the vigilance of providence. Remote in the ocean as well as amongst the habitations of men, the danger of venturing too far on forbidden ground is occasionally displayed in a very affecting manner. A bird belonging to the land draws near the ship, borne on a weary wing. Surprised in all probability, while hovering on the shore, by a sudden blast whose impetuosity it was unable to resist, it was carried out to sea, and perhaps for several days was driven along, without any other exertion on its own part but that of preventing itself from falling into the water. As the storm abated the anxieties of self preservation returned, and it looked round for a place of safety. The appearance of the ship attracts its notice, and like the dove at the deluge of the old world, it draws near with confidence and hope. The antipathies of its na-

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ture are subdued by suffering, and it is no longer afraid of man. It seeks a refuge at his side, and may be sure to find one in the compassion of the sailor, who has himself known danger and fear. The extent of the hostile element on which this bird was exposed, the weakness of its frame, and the wonderful concurrence of circumstances which effect its preservation, naturally raise the mind to the contemplation of that eternal power without whose permission even a sparrow cannot fall to the ground, and who, out of the very jaws of death can give deliverance.

In ordinary cases the variety at sea is not great; there is a fatiguing sameness in the avocations of the day; and incidents which elsewhere would be reckoned trifling are there sufficient to amuse the mind. Of these, however, all such as serve to compose the thoughts, and to inspire tranquillity and hope are peculiarly pleasing. Hence it is observed, with a mingled sentiment of satisfaction and joy, that in the bosom of the ocean the grand phenomena of nature are as magnificent and beautiful as in the best cultivated land. There the arch of heaven preserves its majesty, and the rainbow the splendour of its appearance; there the sky is variegated with all the tints and shadings which give lustre to a summer morning, or mildness

to an autumnal day. The scene, indeed, is peculiar, and the mariner finds himself in a new situation. As the sun descends below the gilded wave, a solemn stillness prevails ; no cattle low ; no smoke rises, and no distant noise indicates the presence or the labours of men. In proportion as the last streaks of reflected light disappear in the west, a deeper gloom advances from the opposite quarter ; and at length the horizon consists of dark waters and thick clouds of the sky.

Such a situation requires vigilance and caution, and may lead us to consider in the third place, the various dangers to which the seafaring life is exposed.

The defenceless state of a ship at sea without consort or convoy, the continual exposure to accidents, and the little probability of escape or deliverance were any evil to happen, must in some degree at least render a voyage a tedious and an anxious period. The safety of the mariner is always uncertain, and his life is in jeopardy every hour. In the finest weather and with the fairest prospects, the carelessness or the casualty of a moment may destroy his hopes, and reduce him to extremity. They who follow other professions may also walk in the midst of dangers, of snares, and of death ; but then these

are in general concealed from their view, and they proceed in a beaten tract without disquietude or apprehension. But a multitude of hazards surround the mariner which perpetually stare him in the face, and there is hardly a step he can take, or a part of his duty that he can discharge without exposing himself to danger.

Besides, the mind has never either more leisure or inclination to contemplate the nature of the scene, and to dwell on its uncertainties, than during a long voyage. Many things occur to fix the attention on what is present, and few to divert it to more exhilarating prospects. The seclusion from the world, the absence of friends, and of all the objects that have been accustomed to carry the individual beyond himself, leave the mind unoccupied; nothing interrupts the current of uneasy thought; and when our fears are once alarmed, they magnify real and create imaginary dangers.

But even imagination, fertile as it is in fiction, can scarcely multiply the perils of the sea. So many combinations of difficulty and suffering are possible on that element, and such a variety of new and untried evils are daily experienced in the course of navigation, that no calculation of chances can ascertain the sum of hardship to which it is exposed. From the history of nau-

tical expeditions of all kinds, it is evident, that more complicated and severe distresses have been endured in ships than, was ever known on shore even in the time of siege and battle. Fatigues, and terrors, and disasters are the mariner's inseparable attendants; and these are increased in proportion to the charge and authority with which he is invested. The master's office is peculiarly arduous: The management of the ship and the seamen is expected of him, as well as resolution and conduct in the season of perplexity. Whatever is difficult or embarrassing in a voyage falls on him with double weight, and his vigilance and activity can never sleep with safety. Contrary winds or continued calms are equally hostile to his repose; while the scarcity of provisions, the attack of disease, or the entrance of discontent, summon him at once to the most delicate and decisive interposition.

The text refers in a particular manner to the labours and dangers of the storm, and though these are not the worst evils incident to navigation, yet they are of a very alarming kind, and awaken all the anxieties of the heart.

From the season and situation in which it attacks the mariner, the terror as well as danger of the storm, may be greatly augmented. In the dead of night, it is an awful thing to en-

counter the rage of the wind and the tossings of the sea. Light is enlivening ; and the face of heaven, even though enveloped with clouds, inspires a degree of confidence and security which we never possess in darkness. Besides, the measures to be taken for the safety and ease of the vessel are then obvious, and can be carried into execution with more certainty and expedition, than when all is night and uproar, and the master's orders can neither be heard nor anticipated.

In every situation, however, and with all possible precaution, the working of the tempest is terrible to the mariner. When heaved from its bed the ocean swells tumultuously, nothing can withstand the commotion. Mountains are heaped upon mountains, and the stoutest ship must labour for life. Meanwhile dangers thicken, and fear invades the company. Every hour their condition grows more critical ; " They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths : Their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end."

The continuance of their trials exhausts their strength, and depresses their spirits ; and at length, overpowered by fatigue, they give themselves up to despondence. On the brink of eternity, they think of the seat of Judgment,

and of their appearance before God. But fears are in the way, and the scene which excites them instead of inspiring hope, suggests the idea of terrible majesty and devouring wrath. What a moment is this for the dissolute and impure ! Their past actions rush upon their memory, and conscience condemns them for every sin they have committed. Stung with remorse, they shrink from the thought of meeting the Father of their spirits in all the freshness of unrepented wickedness. But who shall now interpose in their behalf, or add to their life a short respite for penitence and preparation ? Their friends are far distant and cannot hear their cry ; they are cut off from the inhabitants of the world, and there is none to pity, far less to relieve them. Without a comforter in all the earth but the God whom they have so often offended, their eyes and hearts are lifted up to heaven, and they call upon the Lord if so be he will think upon them that they perish not. The King of mercy, who rules in the system of nature, and hears the voice of all those that pray unto him, listens to their supplication, rebukes the wind, and says unto the sea, peace, be still. Immediately the storm becomes a calm ; the sky resumes its wonted serenity ; and the sun looks out and smiles. "Then are they glad because they be quiet ; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven."

But fears which excite suggests the idea of death. What and impure memory, and every sin they remorse, they sing the Father of unrepented interpose in short respite for their friends are cry; they are the world, and relieve them. earth but the offended, their heaven, and they all think upon King of mercy, and hears the him, listens to wind, and says immediately the sky resumes its looks out and cause they be to their desired

But perhaps their hardships and sufferings are not yet at an end. As his home rises before him, the joy of the mariner is checked by the solemn consideration, that trouble is not peculiar to the ocean, that disease and death are always at work, and that every day produces changes of its own. In this various life, indeed, it sometimes happens that they who go down to the sea in ships are preserved from the dangers of their profession, to meet severer affliction on the shore. The family and relations whom they left in health, and whom they expected to embrace in gladness, dwell in the house of mourning. The eyes that were wont to brighten at the signal of return, are closed in death; and the heart which overflowed with gratitude in the hour of reunion, is covered with the clouds of the valley. The habitation of domestic joy is dark and empty; the voice of kindness which chid the long, though involuntary absence, is silent; and the tender affection which shared in every vicissitude of fortune, and called for the whole story over and over, no longer sweetens the bitterness of grief, or heightens the transport of joy. The unexpectedness of such an event, and the sudden transition from the elevation of hope to the depth of affliction, makes this stroke fall heavy on the head of the mariner: But it is one of the calamities incident to the seafaring

life, and ought to concur with the rest in impressing sailors with an abiding sense of their absolute dependence on God, and of his great goodness in saving them from so many dangers, and visiting them so seldom with such afflictive dispensations.

From this short and imperfect view of the perils of navigation, I now proceed to offer some observations on the sentiments and conduct becoming seamen. And here, surely, I may be allowed to ask in the first place, what returns of veneration, obedience, and gratitude are not due from those who are so peculiarly under the care of God, and so signally preserved by his providence?

We have all received so many blessings from the goodness of our Maker, that we are bound to love and to serve him so long as we have any being. But the ordinary tenor of his providence is so benificent, and in common life the gifts of his liberality come so much, as it were, in the common course of things, that we do not generally perceive and acknowledge the hand of the giver. We are only awakened to consideration and gratitude by singular and striking interpositions of mercy; and however unthankful we may be for our daily preservation, and the necessary blessings of life, we all agree that persons who are exposed to imminent dan-

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In justice to human nature, it must be allow-
ed that this sentiment has a perceptible influence
on the conduct of those who have concerns at
sea. Considering that element as hostile to hu-
man life, and taking it for granted that it must
require the peculiar care of Providence to pre-
serve the mariner, and to prosper the business
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guarded manner of expression, and a more than
ordinary shew of piety distinguishes the conver-
sation of the sober part of sailors. The same
thing may be remarked in the forms of insur-
ance and agreement respecting shipping. The
supremacy of Providence is devoutly acknowl-
edged by the contracting parties; and phras-
es expressive of dependence on the divine
will, occur more frequently in their covenants,
than in other writings of a similar nature. Act-
uated by the same sentiment, it is common for
those who venture on enterprizes not exempted
from danger, without any public, and frequent-
ly it may be presumed without any private sup-
plication for the divine assistance and protection,
to request the prayers of the Church before they
proceed to sea,

On that turbulent element men live under the impression and the awe of a superior. They are encompassed with a sky which blackens contrary to their expectation, and find themselves at the mercy of winds and waters over which they have no controul. The sense of fear is almost inseparable from such a situation; it is excited by the grand display of power, by the magnitude of the danger, and the active solitudes of self preservation. Amidst the workings of the deep we look up with awful reverence to that invisible arm, which rules the most active elements with as much ease as the most inert. This sentiment is so natural to the human mind, that we find the prophet Jeremiah employing it with great effect in his expostulation with the disobedient Jews. "Fear ye not me, saith the Lord, will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree that it cannot pass it; and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail, though they roar yet can they not pass over it!"*

But though the fear of God, worked into the mind by the manifestations of his power, ought always to operate as a restraint from offending him, yet it is a transient as well as an illiberal emotion

* Jer. v. 22.

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and cannot safely be trusted as the guide of con-
 duct. Better principles ought to guard the vir-
 tue, and prompt the obedience of the christian
 sailor. You have heard of the long suffering
 patience of God, and of his goodness in the gos-
 pel; you have cried to him in trouble, and
 been delivered, and when he makes you to
 dwell at ease, will you forget his mercy, or your
 obligations to gratitude? In the season of tran-
 quillity, it is your duty to cherish the remem-
 brance of the protection that was extended to
 you in the hour of dismay, and to let that re-
 membrance give fervour to your piety, and firm-
 ness to your obedience. It is your duty to ded-
 icate the life which God preserved from the
 proud waters to religion and holiness, to culti-
 vate the spirit of devotion, to attend the public
 worship of your preserver, and to publish what
 he has done for your souls in the presence of
 your brethren. These duties are forcibly and
 pathetically recommended in the text, "Oh
 that men would praise the Lord for his good-
 ness, and for his wonderful works to the chil-
 dren of men! Let them exalt him also in the
 congregation of the people, and praise him in
 the assembly of the elders."

By such rational and manly conduct you
 would unspeakably promote your comfort and
 peace of mind. A steadfast trust in God, and a

devout dependence on his providence, would arm you with courage and constancy for all the labours of your profession. Genuine piety would purify the imagination from visionary terrors, and cast out every fear but the fear of doing wrong. Shadowy presages, evil omens, and unlucky days, the reliques of ancient superstition, at which the uninstructed sailor still trembles, would no longer be regarded with cowardly dread; things that are indifferent would cease to give birth to anticipations of disaster; and all the varieties of appearance in the sea and the sky would be viewed without apprehension. Safe in the divine protection, and sure of a friend in the ruler of the storm, even amidst the wrath of the elements, the pious mariner would possess his soul in patience, and act in the very face of death with that calm serenity which is so useful in desperate cases. Animal courage is an uncertain quality, dependent on circumstances, and aptest to fail when needed most. At any rate no rigidity of nerves, or boldness of natural temper, can bestow that real bravery which springs from a good conscience, and from the confidence of safety. In the hour of trial to unassisted nature the value of true piety is fully proved. "God is our refuge and strength," say the good, "a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear though the earth be

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removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midft of the fea. Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains fhake with the swellings thereof."*

In the 2d place, let me admonifh thofe who frequent the fea to beware of an unprofitable and pernicious fin, to which from example and inconfideratenefs they are much expofed, not to fay addicted; I mean the fin of profane fwearing.

In order to preferve on the mind of his creatures that awful reverence which is due to the majesty of his perfections, and that inviolable fanctity which is effential to the obligation of an oath, God commanded by an immutable law, that his holy name fhould not be taken in vain.

There is a folemnity and ftrength in the penal fanction of this precept which ought never to be forgotten. "Thou fhalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltlefs that taketh his name in vain."

Now, if we attend to our feelings in ordinary life we fhall find that it is natural for ourfelves to be extremely jealous of the manner in which our name is mentioned. All nations have fhewn a wonderful delicacy on this fubject and the very

* Pfalms xlvi. 1.

Structure of language bears witness to the solicitude of mankind to avoid offence by rudeness in addressing the present, or a disrespectful use of the names of the absent. Indeed there is no expression of contempt more mortifying, than the unceremonious and scornful use of our name. Even between equals the uneasy emotion which this incivility produces is very pungent ; it brings the flush of indignation into the face, embitters our resentments against an enemy, and occasions at least a temporary disgust with a friend. But if it is unseemly and improper for a man to use the name of his fellow in a familiar and disrespectful manner, how infinitely more unseemly and improper must it be for creatures to prostitute and abuse the name of their Creator, to make it the burden of their conversation, and to degrade it as a kind of expletive in the chasms of their discourse ? Other sins, as has often been observed, may have their temptations and their alleviating circumstances, but for this sin there is no apology. Neither pleasure nor profit can result from the profane habit of taking the name of God in vain. Even when used as an asseveration, perhaps the most plausible pretence that can be alleged for the impious practice, it defeats its purpose, and instead of adding credit and authority to the relation it was meant to corroborate, uniformly

excites a suspicion and distrust of the designs of the narrator. A person of good faith needs no attestation to the truth of his report, and an army of oaths will not give credit to the lips of a liar. From these observations we may learn, in part, the criminality of profane swearing, and the reason why God will not hold them guiltless who are addicted to it.

The habit implies a culpable want of reverence for his divine majesty, and a determined spirit of disobedience without the prospect of reward; it destroys the practical regard which is due to the supreme object of religious worship, and weakens the sanctions of an oath, the last bond of truth and civil society.

Beside all this, such as follow the sea ought to recollect that profane swearing is peculiarly unsuitable to their defenceless condition. Your calling, as has repeatedly been stated, is full of hazard, and in the time of need no other arm but God's can save you from destruction. Be exhorted then to respect, in the day of quiet, that holy name which you must invoke when at your wit's end. Be not wicked over much; and cease to imprecate on every trifling occasion the wrath of the Almighty, lest you so far provoke his indignation, as to make him fulfil at your latest hour the most terrible denunciation in the

scriptures. "Because ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof, I also will laugh at your calamity and mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind."*

In the third place, Remembering the difficulties of your profession, and the accidents to which it exposes you, be admonished to be temperate and sober in all things.

It would exhaust your patience, and require a volume to enumerate the evils which are occasioned by drunkenness. That stupifying vice is equally pernicious to the body, the mind, and the worldly interests of those who surrender themselves to its power. But beside the long train of direct evils which it never fails to produce, it also operates as an inlet to every species and degree of wickedness. The drunkard has no command over himself, and in the paroxysms of intoxication, is equally liable to perpetrate the vilest or the most atrocious crimes. "Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath wounds without cause? They that tarry long at the wine."

The scriptures compare the state of a drunkard on shore to that of a person who lieth down

* Prov. i. 25, 26, 27.

in the midst of the sea, or of one that sleepeth on the top of a mast. But how much more imminent is the danger on that devouring element? The mariner needs a clear eye and a steady hand: All his faculties are necessary to him; for when the ship is under sail there is no time to rectify mistakes, and in general the inadvertence of a moment is punished with immediate death.

It is painful to recollect how great a number of sailors, in the midst of their vigour and usefulness, are annually lost to their families, their friends, and their country, by this debasing vice. Surprised in the frenzy or the insensibility of drunkennels, they are carried, without a moment's preparation, to the judgment of God, to give an account of their life, and of the defenceless condition in which they allowed themselves to be cut off in the midst of their days.

This consideration is awful, and ought to have its weight with drunkards. But perhaps it is unnecessary to expostulate with them on the folly and danger of their conduct; for among the other effects of that destructive habit, this is not the least alarming one, that it generally acquires such a complete ascendancy in the end, as to become almost, if not altogether, invincible. Let such then as are yet unenslaved re-

joice in their sobriety, and be thankful to God for his preventing and restraining grace. Let them hold fast their integrity in this instance, and determine to avoid, so long as they live, all approaches to drunkenness, with as much care as they would avoid the worst evils that can befall them.

Lastly, to sobriety and temperance it would be your wisdom to add moderation and frugality.

The life you lead is a rough and laborious one, and your wages are hardly earned. Much painful work must be performed, and many an inclement night spent on the watch, even in the course of a prosperous voyage. Hence it is obvious that the duties of the naval profession require health and strength, and an unbroken constitution; at the same time it is plain that these duties necessarily shorten the duration of that period in which only they can be borne. Severe exertion, want of regular rest, and increase of anxiety, and suffering in the worst weather, with frequent and sudden changes of climate and provisions, undermine the constitution, waste the principle of life, and produce a premature old age. Accordingly it has often been remarked, that there are in comparison but few grey-headed sailors, and that in the evening of life a person of that profession can give but a

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forrowful account of the companions of his youth and his voyages. In the same ship the succession of crews is rapid, though the owners remain unchanged; and few sailors, in proportion, continue fit for service to the time of their death, when that event is produced by the gradual decay of age. If these observations are just, it follows of course that even independent of accidental calamity, a long season of inaction lies before the mariner, which must be comfortable or uncomfortable according to the prudence or imprudence of his conduct while in the receipt of wages.

Hence results the obligation so peculiarly incumbent on sailors to be saving of their gains, and to provide in the time of health and service for the helplessness of infirmity, and the wants of old age. Unfortunately, however, in spite of sense and reason, the spirit of prodigality and wastefulness has long been regarded as one of the distinguishing characteristics of the seafaring life; and from the number and the arts of those who are interested in encouraging it, and from the generosity of nature from which it is of purpose supposed to spring, it has been sanctioned by custom, and is now almost converted into a professional habit.

Sailors no doubt have many and strong temptations to run into extremes in conduct. The restraints to which they are subjected on ship-board are removed when they reach their harbour; and it is wonderful in how short a space the impressions of the voyage are obliterated. As the visions of sleep are dispersed by the light of the morning, so the ideas which occupied the mind at sea are scattered by the sight of the shore. Fatigue and fear are no longer felt; vows are forgotten with the perils which produced them; and from the very abstinence of their life, sailors rush upon forbidden pleasures with all the hunger of appetite.

In these intervals of service they heed not the storms that are past, nor the approaching miseries of being at once friendless, and indigent, and old. By an oath and a jest they banish serious thought, and take courage in dissipating the wages which ought to support and cheer their declining days.

But in the end they suffer severely for their misconduct. When discharged as no longer capable of service, they have neither resource nor asylum. Estranged from their friends by the nature of their employment, and wholly unqualified for the ordinary labours of life, they are forced to cast themselves upon the charity of

the public. The condition of the mendicant poor is always humiliating ; but when there is a presumption that the beggar's poverty has been occasioned by his vices, his solicitations excite little compassion, and even his importunity extorts but scanty alms.

There is no other way of avoiding such wretchedness, but by avoiding the folly and extravagance which produce it. Be it then your fixed purpose to act a rational and sober part. Not that I would harden your hearts against the entrance of pity, or shut your hands against the claims of distress. Exercise compassion and beneficence, only guide your affairs with discretion. Live by principle, and prescribe to yourselves an honourable economy. Cherish no superfluous desires, and incur no unnecessary expense, that if accident or growing infirmities should disable you for service, it may be in your power to retire to some decent station, in which the last years of life may be useful and happy.

But here you will naturally recollect that this is not the whole of the provision which it becomes you to make for the future. Melancholy and uncomfortable were the stormy voyage of human life, if it conducted us to no safe haven of peace and of joy. But beyond this sea of trouble there is a harbour of everlasting

rest. The inconveniences and evils which distress us here have no existence in that unclouded region ; the wind and the waves are still ; the danger of shipwreck is over ; the condition of the good is happy beyond conception ; and their happiness will have no end. Is it not of the first importance then to be ready, if we may be allowed the expression, for this final embarkation ? In this sublunary state every thing is uncertain. Our labours may be fruitless and our preparations vain, for death and judgment only are fixed and unavoidable. Be it therefore your first and chief care to make your peace with God according to the terms of the gospel. Consider your ways, and repent of your sins ; pray for the forgiveness of God thro' the intercession of Jesus, and for the grace of his Spirit to keep you from falling in the time to come. Give not sleep to your eyes nor slumber to your eyelids till you have made some progress in this most needful work ; and when you have once heartily begun it, you may go down to the sea in ships and do business in great waters in the calm and in the storm, in peace and in war, knowing that God is your Saviour, and that under his protection no lasting evil can befall you.

"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."*

* Acts xx. 32.

THE END.

